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ONDCP FOR LT COL RONALD GARNER

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SUBJECT: NAS MONTHLY REPORT, JANUARY 2008

SUMMARY

1. (U) The key developments in January 2008:
** CORAH started the 2008 eradication season on January 18 near Pizana northeast of Tocache.

** An increase in murders east of the Andes gained public attention due to the link with eradication and alternative development.

** The GOP initiated quarterly meetings to monitor the progress of projects in our bilateral Letter of Agreement.

** The three NAS-supported PNP Police Academies enrolled 509 new students for its 11-month training course.

** Peruvian police plan to open 3 new police bases in "hard core" coca-growing valleys.

** On January 2, the Peruvian Air Police changed commanders again.

** A police C-206 crashed landed at Palmapampa, prompting calls for better safety and standardization procedures.

** NAS-Lima visited Colombia to discuss helicopter training with NAS-Bogota, MAAG, and Colombian Air Force.

** A trained and certified Peruvian Customs diving unit, funded by NAS, is scheduled to deploy in mid-February.

** Peruvian Congress questions the constitutionality of the new asset-forfeiture law.

** Over 300 people participated in the 1st annual gathering of all 12 community anti-drug coalitions.

** New program promotes legal lifestyles through youth mobilization in 5 provinces of the Ayacucho region.
END SUMMARY

2008 ERADICATION PROGRAM STARTS

¶2. (U) CORAH fielded 200 workers to start off the 2008 eradication season on January 18 near Pizana northeast of Tocache. In the first 12 days of operations, CORAH eradicated 391 hectares of coca of which 79 percent was replanted coca that was eradicated in 2005 and 2006. Eradication was slowed due to several factors: coca farmers claimed their plants were legal by showing ENACO receipts (CORAH countered this by explaining to the farmers' representatives the legal basis for eradication); bad weather; coca plants being cut off at ground level, which made uprooting the plant more labor intensive; and a police rotation that did not coincide with CORAH's (the police have now agreed to rotate every six days along with CORAH).

VIOLENT ATTACKS INCREASE IN ERADICATION AREA

¶3. (U) In January, an uptick in the number of murders east of the Andes gained more public attention because of the link with eradication and alternative development. At least 10 people, including two teenagers found with gunshots to the head on the road in Tocache, were murdered in the first two weeks of the month in the Upper Huallaga. On January 22, 6 members of a family--parents, three daughters (1, 7 and 10 years of age) and a brother--were killed and mutilated in the village of Las Piedras in Ucayali, according to the press and local contacts, because of having voluntarily eradicated their coca crop and joining the Alternative Development Program. Local sources indicated that the father had become more active in promoting the program and in resisting cocalero pressures. The father of the family was accused of having revealed sites of drug maceration pits. Prime Minister Jorge del Castillo denounced the crime perpetuated by narco-traffickers and lamented the death of people only because they had chosen licit lifestyles. He said the government would fight back and would root out those responsible. Romulo Pizarro, Executive Director of DEVIDA, also condemned the murders and reaffirmed his determination to fight back against narco-trafficking. Minister of Interior Luis Alva Castro downplayed the murder of the family of six as an isolated incident. Reports from local contacts indicate, however, that there is an upward trend in such violence as dozens of deliberate murders are going unreported in the drug zones.

NAS MEETS WITH GOP TO REVIEW CN PROGRAMS

¶4. (U) On January 28, the NAS Deputy Director attended a meeting organized by the Anti-Drug Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE) to review the progress of the FY 2006-2007 counter-narcotics assistance programs. Our bilateral Letter of Agreement (LOA) for narcotics and law enforcement assistance requires that a meeting should be held quarterly with a report prepared on the status of each program receiving assistance from the USG. The January 28 meeting was the first to be convened in more than a year. The MRE, the responsible agency, organized an excellent forum with high-level participation from all GOP counter-narcotics program partners (e.g., CORAH, DIRANDRO, DEVIDA, Customs, and the Public Ministry). Eleven organizations sent high-level representatives and all were thoroughly familiar with all phases of the assistance received and the status of their respective projects. A detailed assessment of each program was presented, followed by a discussion on the strengths, weaknesses, and direction of each program. From the NAS perspective, the meeting successfully demonstrated that the GOP entities have a good understanding of their responsibilities as outlined in the LOA. NAS took advantage of the occasion to remind the forum of the impending budget reductions and the need for the GOP to take a larger role in certain programs.

POLICE ACADEMIES ENROLL 509 NEW STUDENTS

¶5. (U) The three NAS-supported PNP Police Academies enrolled 509 new students this month (133 in Santa Lucia, 207 in

Ayacucho, and 169 in Mazamari). The new recruits will graduate in December 2008 after receiving 11 months of intensive training.

¶6. (U) NAS is coordinating with DIRANDRO to establish a government and police presence in the Monzon and Cachicoto river valleys in the Upper Huallaga region. The PNP is taking control of two Peruvian Army bases in the area. NAS will refurbish bases to house DIRANDRO officers, some of whom have recently graduated from the NAS-supported police academies. The PNP is also procuring the land title to the army base at Boca Mantaro in the VRAE for the same purpose.

¶7. (U) During this month, DIRANDRO destroyed 55 cocaine-base laboratories and seized 27,167 kg of precursor chemicals, 32 kg of cocaine base, and 337 kg of HCl cocaine.

ANOTHER NEW COMMANDER FOR PERUVIAN AIR POLICE

¶8. (SBU) On January 2, Colonel Augusto E. Vega Garcia was named the new commander of the Peruvian Air Police. Vega is a solid choice because he has been the DIRANDRO base commander in Santa Lucia and Pucallpa, but he is the third commander of the Air Police in the last 13 months who is not an aviator. So far, Vega has taken some positive steps in assuming more responsibilities as NAS budgets are being reduced. For example, Vega has directed his pilots to complete night-vision goggles (NVG) training, which is a critical skill for supporting the 400 to 500 eradicators and CN police in the field on day and night operations. NVG training has been a high priority for NAS.

PNP PLANE CRASH LANDS; 5TH INCIDENT IN 13 MONTHS

¶9. (SBU) On January 23, a PNP Air Police (DIRAVPOL) Cessna C-206 crashed on landing at the police base at Palmapampa. It was a training flight with 3 pilots and cargo for the police (4 boxes of dynamite). There were no serious injuries, but the cargo had not been properly secured, resulting in minor injuries. This is the fifth accident or incident with DIRAVPOL fixed-wing aircraft (not under INL/A control) in the past 12 months. NAS has no oversight of DIRAVPOL aircraft for safety and standardization -- only for INL/A aircraft flown by the police. Previously, the DIRAVPOL commander asked for advice on setting up a fixed-wing standardization program, but his replacement decided not to accept the assistance. Since it is in the interest of both the GOP and USG to have a safety and standardization program, NAS and visiting INL/A fixed-wing standardization pilot Joaquin Pereda will again offer training assistance.

SEEKING MORE COST-EFFECTIVE ROTARY-WING TRAINING

¶10. (U) NAS personnel visited Colombia on 30 January to discuss Initial Entry Rotary Wing training (IERW) with NAS-Bogota, MAAG, and the Colombian Air Force. Due to budget cuts, NAS is looking for alternative ways to train helicopter pilots and crews. The IERW training is necessary, because personnel are constantly lost to retirements, reassignment, and other demands. A cooperative training program with NAS-Bogota should be more cost-effective than the IERW training at Fort Rucker (approximately USD 270,000.00) per student or at Bristow Academy in Florida (approximately USD 80,000). The central advantage to IERW training in Colombia would be using the DOS-owned UH-1s. Presently, neither Fort Rucker nor Bristow use an UH-1 series helicopter. Therefore, intensive additional training and flight hours are required in Peru for the pilots to transition to the new UH-2s. These flight hours could be put to better use supporting CN operations.

¶11. (U) Other NAS Aviation activities include:

-- support for the visit of Henrietta Fore, Director of US Foreign Assistance, who inspected the new police base in Ayacucho on January 11.

-- receipt of the new digital camera for the Peruvian Air Force C-26 from ARINC in December. ARINC scheduled two weeks of training for the FAP, but after three days the camera stopped working. It was returned to the U.S. for repair.

-- evaluation of the NAS B-1900D aircraft program by INL/A fixed-wing standardization pilot Joaquin Pereda, who will be in Peru January 28 through February 2.

-- review by DynCorp International of the corrective actions required by the Aviation Resources Management Survey (ARMS) in August 2007. Most of the deficiencies have been corrected; one remaining item was for minor construction and the PNP is expected to approve it in early February.

DIVERS TO SEARCH FOR DRUGS HIDDEN BELOW THE WATERLINE

¶12. (U) The NAS-sponsored Peruvian Customs (SUNAT) diving unit (DU) will be fully trained and certified for its scheduled deployment in mid-February. The DU was established to inspect the hull of a ship below the waterline where drugs may be attached to the hull or otherwise hidden. Ships exporting cargo internationally are the main target for the DU. The DU was organized after some traffickers were caught with wetsuits and diving gear as well other intelligence reporting. In addition, the divers will inspect barges that are reportedly transporting drugs along major river systems throughout Peru. SUNAT will assume total responsibility and control (nationalization) for the DU upon deployment.

¶13. (U) During January, 183 kg of cocaine HCl was seized at the Jorge Chavez International Airport (JCIA) and Peruvian Postal System in Lima. Twenty-four internal carriers (mules) were detained, 14 of which were identified by the x-ray body scanner. A mule ingests an average of 900 grams of cocaine (up to 130 pellets).

ASSET FORFEITURE LAW MAY CONFLICT WITH CONSTITUTION

¶14. (U) NAS assisted the Ministry of Justice and members of the Peruvian Congress during 2007 to pass an asset forfeiture law. The law went into effect in November 2007. Subsequently, the members of the Constitution Commission of the Peruvian Congress decided that some elements of the law are not consistent with the Peruvian constitution. Their report was never issued to the full Congress so the law remains in force--for now. The Garcia administration continues to strongly support the new asset forfeiture law. It is likely, however, that a number of changes to the law will be proposed once the Congress reconvenes in March. It remains to be seen the impact of these changes on the law's relevance to combat organized crime in Peru.

COMMUNITY ANTI-DRUG COALITIONS GATHER FOR ANNUAL EVENT

¶15. (U) On January 12, more than 300 coalition members--parents, youth, and local leaders--participated in the first annual gathering of all 12 community anti-drug coalitions (CAC) in Lima. The mayors of two municipalities attended along with representatives of 10 more municipalities in Metropolitan Lima and Callao. Prizes were given to the winners of a CAC drawing contest aimed at gathering ideas for outreach campaigns from the community members. The mayor of San Borja donated the use of the municipal auditorium for the event. More CAC members would have attended if space permitted.

PERUVIAN NGO IS MOBILIZING YOUTH IN AYACUCHO REGION

¶16. (U) On January 29 as part of a visit by INL/LP desk officer Laiza Casas, NAS attended a presentation by CEDRO, a local NGO, about a program to mobilize youth in the 5 provinces in Ayacucho region that are primary transport routes for narcotraffickers in the VRAE. The program,

"Toward a Culture of Lawfulness" (Hacia la Cultura de la Legalidad) seeks to work with youth on social and economic development projects. With the help of strategic alliances with business and the local and regional governments, the youth groups aim to create sustainable businesses and social programs. Ayacucho boasts many archeological and cultural sites with the potential of being a tourist destination to rival Cusco/Machu Picchu. Creating legal lifestyles is a challenge because Ayacucho is part of the transport route for narcotraffickers. Ayacucho has very limited funds because, unlike surrounding regions, it has no mines or gas projects that could provide taxes/royalties to supplement its budget. Without programs such as CEDRO's, youth in Ayacucho have little hope of escaping a life in the narcotics industry.

MCKINLEY